

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Tetzaveh – Purim 5785

D. Mordechai Schlachter

The evil decree is sent out and Mordechai responds.

וּמֶרְדֵּכַי יָדַע אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשְׂהָ וַיִּקְרַע מְרִדְכַי אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שֵׁק וְאַפָּר וַיֵּצֵא בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּזְעַק זַעֲקָה גְדוֹלָה וּמָרָה:

“And Mordechai knew of all that had happened, and Mordechai rented his clothes, and he dressed in sackcloth and ashes, and he went out into the city, and he cried out greatly and bitterly.” (Esther 4:1).

How did Mordechai know all that happened? What was all that happened besides the evil decree, which everyone would know as it was proclaimed publicly? What is the significance of both renting his clothing and putting on sackcloth and ashes?

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vedaas, said in one of his navi shiurim, the following explanation. Mordechai was part of the Anshei Kenesses Hagadola, the men of the great assembly. In Pirkei Avos we are taught that the Torah was given to Moshe, then to Yehoshua, on and on, until it was given to the Anshei Kenesses Hagadola. This means that the entire Torah – not just the five books that Moshe wrote – was passed down. This included Naviim and Kesuvim. Thus, Mordechai, as part of the Anshei Kenesses Hagadola already knew the entire sefer Esther, as it is part of the complete Torah. Therefore, Mordechai knew all that happened.

On a more practical note, Mordechai would sit in the palace gate and hear the gossip of what went on in the palace. When the decree came out, he knew all that happened. It was not just a decree on the Jews. It was the fact that the Jews attended the great dinner, that Vashti was banished or executed, that his ward, Esther, was made queen, and that the Amaleiki Haman issued the decree in the king’s name, and that it was just two days to Pesach. Now he knew how the puzzle fell into place.

In the Torah, the term יָדַע means more than knowledge. It means understanding the relationship. Adam knew his wife and they had a child. (Bereishis 4:1). This is more than a euphemism; this means they had shalom bayis after the events of the Eden Garden. Avraham was to know that part of the relationship he had with Hashem, and a prerequisite for having the Land, was that his children would serve others. (Ibid 15:13). The new King of Egypt did not know Yosef or the relationship that Egypt had with him, and acted evilly because of it. (Shmos 1:8). Hashem know of Bnei Yisroel’s travels during the forty years in the wilderness. (Devarim 2:7). Moshe assured the people that the net sum of the forty years was a repaired and complete relationship.

A further understanding is reading how the Torah talks about Hashem “knowing.” Hashem called to Avraham, through a Heavenly Messenger, and said, “Because now I know, because you fear the Lord.” (Bereishis 22:12). Certainly, it could

not come as a surprise to Hashem. The statement means that Avraham should really understand that the relationship between them was complete. The tests were over, Avraham proved himself worthy, and an eternal promise was earned. Further, "And the Lord saw Bnei Yisroel, and the Lord knew." (Shmos 2:25). Hashem saw all the suffering and cries and now the relationship was complete. Time was ripe for them to leave and become Hashem's nation. Similarly, Pharaoh did not know Hashem. (Ibid 5:2). He did not have a relationship with Hashem and so he had no respect or fear. Hashem told Moshe that the avos did not know the name "Hashem." (Ibid 6:3). Clearly, they did, as I have pointed out in pervious divrei Torah. They just did not have a full relationship with the "Hashem" personality. They got the promises from the Kel Shakkai personality, but they did not live to see the complete Hashem who runs mankind, because their children were not free in their own Land yet.

Mordechai knew the relationship between all events. He knew what was required. He did not rent his clothing out of sorrow. Reuven and Yaakov both tore their clothing and both of them did it before knowing the full outcome of events. Reuven returned to save Yosef from the dungeon and seeing Yosef missing he rent his clothing. (Bereishis 37:29). Only after he tore his clothing he returned to his brothers. (Ibid 37:30). It is possible that they could have told him, "We pulled him up" or "we sold him." Without even knowing the outcome, Reuven tore his clothes. Yaakov did the same. Yaakov saw the bloody tunic and says, "An evil creature devoured it, Yosef has been surely torn from me." (Ibid 37:33). He then tore his clothing. (Ibid 37:34). He did not ask what happened to Yosef. He understood his sons were still jealous of Yosef and had somehow sent Yosef away. Thus, tearing clothing is an act of prayer. Something bad is recognized in the world, and it requires great prayer to rectify before the evil thing comes into fruition. Mordechai had eleven months before the decree would be carried out, but he wasted no time to commence prayer.

Putting on sackcloth is an act of mourning. Yaakov put on sackcloth to mourn his son. (Ibid:34). He mourned because while he held out hope that Yosef was alive and his dreams would come true, he now, alone, mourned his son. The brothers did not consider Yosef to be Yaakov's son. Achav put on sackcloth and mourned himself – did teshuva. Mordechai commenced teshuva for the Jews. He also mourned his relationship with Esther that would forever change. He knew what needed to be done so he knew that she had to approach the king voluntarily.

The previous pasuk says that while Haman and Achashveirosh drank the city of Shushan was  $\text{נִבְּוֶה}$ . Many translate this as "confounded" or "confused." It is the prefix  $\text{נִ}$  with the word  $\text{בְּוֶה}$ . It means the city of Shushan was going to weep. How can a city weep? While the lords were drinking, the city was about to be destroyed. Either the Jews or their enemies would be massacred. The city would not be the same and it would mourn.

Mordechai went out into the city. Out from his personal place to the city where he prayed publicly. Whatever Heavenly decree called for Jews weeping, he wanted that fulfilled so that when Pesach came and Esther went to the king, geula would be certain. It was.

HAPPY PURIM!